

Connecticut Department of Transportation

State Project No. 142-152

Federal-Aid Project No. TBD

Replacement of Bridge No. 01120 – Route 74 EB/WB over the Skungamaug River in
Tolland

Monday October 18, 2021 at 7:00 PM

Virtual Meeting via MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live

Minutes of Public Informational Meeting

In Attendance: There were 13 people in attendance (13 on MS Teams and 0 on YouTube). The meeting participants included residents of Tolland, the Connecticut Department of Transportation, and CHA Consulting, Inc.

Presentation: The virtual meeting, using MS Teams Live Event and YouTube Live was started at 6:45 p.m. with an introductory slide which provided project contact and website information for attendees to view while they waited for the presentation to start. At 7:00 p.m., the formal presentation started with Transportation Project Engineer Brianna Maljanian introducing the representatives of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT), and CHA Consulting, Inc. (CHA), the Consultant Liaison Engineer. Ms. Maljanian then stated the role of the Department and the role of CHA as liaison engineers and continued with a summary of the of the presentation goals. Ms. Maljanian followed, stating that the purpose of this public information meeting is to present the proposed design and discuss any questions, comments, or concerns that the public or town officials may have.

Mr. Thomas Sawtelle from CHA continued with the technical portion of the presentation. he explained the existing bridge condition, and the purpose of the project. Mr. Sawtelle presented the existing site and bridge conditions, proposed project plans, and maintenance and protection of traffic methods needed to replace Bridge No. 01120. Mr. Sawtelle described the utility, environmental and right-of-way impacts associated with the project. Mr. Matthew Geanacopoulos from CTDOT Division of Rights of Way then presented an explanation of the right-of-way acquisition process. Mr. Sawtelle closed the presentation with a summary of the current project schedule and estimated construction cost. Mr. Derick Lessard closed the formal presentation providing the attendees with the project website, and project email address for submission of comments and questions until November 1st, 2021.

Key points of the presentation were:

- The existing superstructure is in poor condition because of the deteriorated bottom flanges of the concrete encased girders.
- The existing roadway width on the bridge does not meet the minimum width of 28 feet required by FHWA based on an ADT of 2700 vehicles and 28 feet required by CTDOT for a rural minor collector road. The bridge is narrower than the approach roadway width. The bridge is therefore considered to be “Functionally Obsolete”.
- The existing bridge is 105 years old and is founded on masonry abutments that will require significant efforts to rehabilitate and extend the service life of the structure.
- There is no under clearance when a 100-year storm event passes under the existing bridge.

- The existing abutments rated to be in Satisfactory condition. There are moderate scour concerns on the site based on a previous investigation performed in 1994.
- The proposed rehabilitation will comprise of a full replacement to accommodate a 34-foot-wide roadway consisting of two 12-foot-wide travel lanes and two 5-foot-wide shoulders. The new superstructure will consist of prestressed concrete T beams topped with a bituminous concrete overlay. Precast concrete integral abutments and wingwalls are proposed behind the existing abutments. A crash tested three-tube-curb-mounted open steel bridge rail and concrete curbing is also proposed over the bridge.
- The existing masonry abutments will be cut down to allow for grading of riparian shelves between the existing and proposed abutments.
- The new superstructure span will be lengthened to approximately 61 feet (bearing to bearing) and skewed to match the natural channel alignment of the Skungamaug River. Both modifications will make the new structure hydraulically adequate.
- The existing bridge rail and approach guiderails do not meet current safety standards and will be replaced with railing systems that will meet safety standards.
- A new horizontal realignment and full depth reconstruction of Route 74 for approximately 1200' is proposed to create a flatter roadway curve which meets the 50 mph design speed standards.
- The proposed maintenance and protection of traffic plan involves a closure of Route 74 at the bridge and detour of traffic for the duration of the bridge construction, which is estimated to be 3 months. The closure period will be during the summer months to minimize impacts to the Town of Tolland schools. The proposed detour route is approximately 6.5 miles long and uses Route 195 and Interstate-84.
- Overhead utilities that are located along the upstream/north side of the bridge will need to be relocated to allow for crane picks during construction of the new bridge.
- One slope easement is proposed for grading required to install a guiderail. The limits of this easement are contained within the property at 1103 Tolland Stage Road.
- A drainage right of way easement is proposed at the southwest corner of the bridge site. This easement is located at the outlet of the existing sluiceway.
- Environmental permits will be required from federal, and state permitting agencies for the project and best management practices will be used to minimize impacts to wetlands and watercourse.
- Construction is currently anticipated to start Spring 2024 and end Fall 2024.
- The project construction is funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds. The estimated construction cost is currently \$6.25 million.

Public Comments and Questions:

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - What is the expected cost of the bridge?

Verbal Response: The Department reiterated that the project construction is funded with 80% Federal funds and 20% State funds. The estimated construction cost is currently \$6.25 million, and there will be at no cost to the Town.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- If this is a bridge replacement project, why is there so much roadway work?

Verbal Response: The Department stated that the bridge is being widened to the standard bridge width that is needed to meet all design codes and standards. This requires the roadway work limits to be extended such that the roadway width matches the new standard bridge width.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- When is the project anticipated to start and how long will it take?

Verbal Response: CHA said construction is anticipated to start Spring 2024; however, it is contingent upon obtaining environmental permit approvals and right-of-way acquisitions. The project will finish in the Fall of 2024 and has an anticipated construction duration of 8 months.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- How will emergency services be provided during the full closure and detour period?

Verbal Response: CHA stated that through coordination with the Town, an ambulance is anticipated to be staged on the east side of the bridge site during the detour and full closure period. It is anticipated the ambulance will be staged in the parking lot of Winding River Village, however further coordination with the owners will be needed as the project progresses. Fire services can still come from the Plains Road station. Also, it was noted an investigation into the response time from the Merrow Road station increases response by about 3 minutes when the detour is in place.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- The current speed on Route 74 is 45 mph, will it stay at 45 and be enforced?

Verbal Response: The Department stated that the project will not change the current posted speed limit on Route 74. It was noted enforcement of posted speed limits is through the State Police.

- Mr. Boyer from the Country Butcher asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- Our initial understanding was Route 74 would remain open. Now we are told the road will be closed for a minimum of three months. That poses many business-related issues.

Verbal Response: The Department stated that it was considered to keep the bridge open during construction but it was determined that it was not feasible.

CHA stated why the existing bridge cannot remain open during construction using conventional staged construction methods:

- The aging masonry abutments of the existing bridge possess too much risk to the contractor and adjacent traffic to perform staged construction operations. Cutting at the stage line creates the potential for the abutments to collapse.
- Staged construction requires overbuild of the bridge width, increasing impacts to the environment, private property, and impact to historically sensitive regions around the project site.
- Conventional staged construction will significantly increase the project construction duration to (2) seasons, increasing the project cost and impacts to traffic.

Following the meeting, the Department followed up with local business owner. It was determined a field meeting would be held with Mr. Boyer and a few residents on the morning of November 10th, 2021 to discuss the project further.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - It appears to us (at the 1096 property) that frontage will be taken from our property. How will this affect our driveway and its entry to Route 74?

Verbal Response: CHA said the project is not permanently taking any private property. A permanent slope easement is being acquired at the NE corner of the site for installation of the new guide rail system. The purpose of the easement is to prevent erosion or excavation of the roadway embankment that supports the new guiderail. A permanent drainage Right of Way is being acquired at the south west corner of the bridge to allow CTDOT to maintain the outlet of the sluiceway.

- Mr. Boyer from the Country Butcher asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:
 - There are safety concerns related to the travel speed on Rt 74 at present time. Straightening the road will only increase travel speeds. Why does the road need to be straightened to replace the bridge?

Verbal Response: CHA said the current curve located west of the bridge project site does not meet the current design standards for a 50-mph design speed. Roadways are generally posted for 5-mph lower than their design speed for safety. The existing alignment is also undesirable for the proposed bridge. The reconstructed approximate 1200' section of Route 74 will produce a wider and flatter curve that meets current design standards and is safer for travelers.

- A representative of the public asked the following follow up emergency services question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- Who is going to pay for the ambulance staged at Winding River Village?

Verbal Response: The Department said the ambulance would be paid through the project's construction funding source and reiterated the 80% Federal 20% State funding split.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- Will there be a designated sidewalk on the bridge for walkers, bicyclers & runners?

Verbal Response: CHA said there will not be a designated sidewalk on the bridge. The existing 23 foot curb-to-curb width bridge will be replaced with a new wider bridge with a curb-to-curb width of 34 feet which includes (2) 5 foot wide striped shoulders. The wider bridge and shoulders are safer for pedestrians and bikes who use the bridge.

- A representative of the public asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- How much noise is expected/ what time of day will construction take place?

Verbal Response: CHA said they have been made aware of the town noise ordinance. The Department also has a maximum noise limit for construction activities. The Department will work with the contractor to schedule noisier activities during daytime hours, when possible. Additionally, it was noted construction is expected during normal work hours, and no night work is anticipated on the project.

- Mr. Boyer from the Country Butcher asked the following question using the MS Teams chat feature:

- Will all questions and answers asked through November 1st be posted for all to review?

Verbal Response: The Department stated a YouTube recording of the live meeting will be posted within a day or two after the Virtual Public Information meeting. It was also noted a report of meeting will be posted to the project webpage. Questions and answers asked through the public comment period will be posted and addressed in the report of meeting.

Adjournment:

The email address, telephone number and project webpage address were provided for any additional questions or comments regarding the project following the meeting. Attendees were reminded to fill out the survey and that any additional comments can be submitted until

November 1st, 2021. Following the meeting, no additional comments via phone voicemails, or email comments were received.

The presentation and project were well received, and the meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.